

The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY
THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

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THE WITNESS OF EARTH TO HEAVEN.

What sweetness on Thine earth doth dwell!
How precious, Lord, these gifts of Thine!
Yet sweeter messages they tell,
These earnest of delights divine.

Yes! glory out of glory breaks,
More than the gift itself is given:
Each gift a glorious promise makes;
Thine Earth doth prophesy of Heaven.

These mighty hills we joy to climb,
These happy streams we wander by,
Reveal the Eternal Hills sublime,
Of God's own river prophesy.

These odors blest, these gracious flowers,
These sweet sounds that around us rise,
Give tidings of the Heavenly Bowers,
Prelude the Angelic Harmonies.

These vernal hours,—what news they bring!
What tidings these bright summers tell!
They foreannounce the Eternal Spring,
Foreshow the Light Ineffable.

And in these gracious ones so dear,
These just souls that our souls make strong,
We feel the holy angels near,
We mingle with the Blissful Throng.

O mercies kindly incomplete!

Dear joys our hearts that may not fill!

Strange grace! that in Thy gifts most sweet
We read of gifts diviner still.

Lord, from Thy gifts to Thee we rise;
But with more strength we soar above
Upon these glorious prophecies,
These earnest of Thy dearer love.

—T. H. Gill.

THE SOUL'S CRY FOR GOD.

"My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God."—
PSALM xlii. 2.

This cry burst from the lips of an ancient man,—no matter who he was; a man who lived long before Christ,—no matter when; and in a far-away land,—no matter where. To us it is the same as if he lived to-day and here, for he has spoken for us all. His words may be taken as a key to our deepest life and as an epitome of the best history of mankind. The longing of the human soul for union with its Source and for the perfect God is at once a confession of dependence and an inspired promise of realization. What can be more pathetic than

"An infant crying in the night,
An infant crying for a light,
And with no language but a cry" ?

But a cry is full of meaning. Something in the heart of the true mother answers to the little one's feeblest wail. No prayer is more intelligible, no prayer is more mighty. And it is the faith of religious men that something in the heart of God—that is, in the spiritual order of the universe which we all inhabit—answers to every human need far more surely and promptly and exactly than a mother's love can answer to the helplessness of her child. Man can no more understand God than the new-born babe can understand the mother; yet all the more real and all the more wonderful is their relation.

Man is laid out on a large scale. He cannot get acquainted with himself without being persuaded that his faculties are capable of indefinite cultivation and expansion. Nothing seems too good for him: nothing is too high to be reached in that infinity to which he aspires. But he is still an infant. All the world is vague to him. His poor little head swims. He does not understand himself, nor the universe he lives in, nor the greatness of his destiny. There is weakness and ignorance in his cry, and sometimes there is terror; yet, even before he knows its meaning, it is a cry for the living God, it is a reaching out to the unknown Power for the help he cannot give to himself. Nothing less than the perfect Wisdom and perfect Love can satisfy his mighty desire. Our very emptiness is only so much room for the divine fulness. Our want and sin must be the opportunity for mercy and grace; and our sense of loneliness proves that we are made for a life of communion.

Yet I think you know of some people who have no restful confidence that they are made for anything great or good here or hereafter. They doubt whether life is really worth taking as a gift, whether the days and years offer anything to thank God for. They live in creation as outsiders. They do not feel themselves to be a part of the great whole. They have no happy sense of being included in a grand and glorious order. They seem to themselves like bits of waste, detached fragments,—

“Eddies of the dust,
Uplifted by the wind, and whirled
Along the highway of the world,
Only to sink again in dust
At the subsiding of the gust.”

Without God the world is a homesick place. Our life becomes a mockery, and in the saddest sense we all seem to be dying of heart failure. We need encouragement; that is, we need *enheartening*, strengthening at the centre, an assurance of inward support. How can we get rid of these wretched misgivings till we are satisfied that our existence is backed up by an adequate power, and that our life stream is supplied from an exhaustless fountain?

I can think of myself as an orphan, an outcast, a pauper, a starveling, or a soup-

house boarder in the universe; as a creature with no standing and no prospects; as a plaything of blind fate and heartless chance. Or I can think of myself as the welcome child of a worthy Father, as a born heir to infinite good, with capacities for taking possession of my inheritance as fast as I grow fit for it. Certainly, my way of looking at myself and at the whole situation will make a mighty difference to me.

The soul must have God for the sake of its own *dignity*. It must feel itself related to the royalties of the universe, and not alone to dust and ashes. “If we look upward,” says Bunsen, “our path lies under stars. If we look downward, our path lies over graves.” Which way shall we look to see the reality? We shall never become aware of our own high rank till we feel ourselves kindred to the Highest and members of a divine family. Then we shall appreciate ourselves and our fellow-men and the rich provisions of nature.

With all our foolish pride and silly vanity, we do not value ourselves for what we really are. We are constantly getting and giving some kind of *hurt*. Why is it that we cannot live together on this planet without doing each other damage? Why is it that we find it so difficult to be just and kind? How do you explain the frequent unhappiness of domestic life, the endless collisions and antagonisms and wrangles of employed and employer, of men in business and in politics? Selfishness! Yes, but selfishness itself is nourished by a low estimate of human nature. We are blind to the divine in the human. Hence we lack self-respect; we lack respect for those around us. Would not genuine self-respect keep a man from base uses of himself, as well as from meanness toward his neighbor? I think millions are depressed by a too low opinion of themselves; and, because they are not intent on seeking the higher forms of good, they crowd and crush each other in a kind of half-animal greed to get the lower forms of good. We could not be so false and cruel if we were not contemptuous. At the heart of all nobleness there is belief in nobleness; that is to say, there is reverence and appreciation. And this love of good is identical with love of God and love of man, and it inspires an unselfish self-love.

The vices by which we degrade ourselves

and the wrongs we do to each other grow from the same evil root,—from contempt of humanity. This is really a want of faith in our relation to God. "God's doors are men." We shut ourselves away from Him whenever we shut ourselves away from each other. But in accepting "the least of these," our brethren, we accept the God who made and loves us all.

The cry of the soul for God is answered not by the sight of a person, but by the incoming of light and love,—the light of reason, or truth, which shows us the right way of life, and the principle of love, which prompts us to walk in that way by fulfilling our human duties. This principle of love unites us with all beings, above and below, in sympathy and service.

All forms of religion express some vague feeling of man's need and God's goodness; but no teacher has seen it so clearly or said it so largely as Jesus. No one seems to have realized such close union with the unseen Spirit. "He alone in all history," says Emerson, "saw the true greatness of man."

Several things that are told us about Jesus show what a high value he set upon human nature. In every little child he saw a candidate for the higher kingdom; in every nobody he saw a somebody; his heart went out to the blinded and silly multitude as so many straying sheep of the true fold; and in the lowest and least of his human brothers he saw himself.

No wonder the common people heard him gladly. They felt that he could see in them more than they could see in themselves. He taught them all to say, "Our Father," as if they shared his own soulship. He encouraged them to try to be perfect like God; and he taught them that they could add to the joy of heaven itself simply by turning from evil to good. Would the angels rejoice merely because a worthless worm had turned its head and begun to crawl toward the gates of Paradise? No; but they sing a gladder song because a glorious spirit like themselves has left the ways of sin and started to join their own bright company.

When they heard these gracious words, no wonder they called it "Good tidings." Many a poor and discouraged man must have held up his head and felt rich in faith and hope and love, as he listened to the clear and cheerful voice which seemed to say:

"If the great God cares for any, he cares for all. Therefore, we must care more for ourselves and for each other."

What is it we most want and need? Is it property, reputation, social standing, or some pleasant way of getting through the twenty-four hours? We wish to be happy. Such a wish is natural and right: it is honorable and worthy of us. But what kind of happiness would best suit our nature and bring us most rich and lasting satisfaction? Can we ever be contented or at peace till there is harmony within and well-regulated relations without? Can we be happy in self-will or self-seeking? Must we not seek our own welfare and completeness by coming into accord with the laws of the world to which we belong and with the welfare of our fellow-inhabitants? But this means nothing less than a movement toward perfection. When Jesus says, "Be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect," is he not merely putting into words our own highest aspiration? Let us joyfully accept it as inspiration. The cry of our souls for God means not only that we need a perfect pattern for our own lives: it means also that we require to be well connected or kept in communication with trustworthy beings and ample resources. Man is an expensive sort of being. He cannot be his best, nor become his best, unless he can draw on an infinite fund of wisdom, goodness, power, opportunity, and companionship. He must also have an infinite extension of time, in order to work out his true career. Must he not, then, feel himself supported by an infinite Good Will? Must he not feel himself living securely in a friendly universe? Must he not be related to something that endures and is worthy to endure? So it is that he cries out for the living God.

Let us do a little serious thinking. Let us ask the meaning of this deep cry in our own souls. Let us close our eyes to the rattling noises which teach us nothing, and let us listen to the still small voice. Did you ever hear or read of any great and noble quality in hero, saint, or martyr, without finding in yourself some seed of thought and feeling and purpose from which the same quality might grow? Did you ever conceive of any quality in the Eternal God himself, without some inward hint that you were made to share the same wisdom, good-

ness, and power? When Jesus says, "Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect," is he not merely putting into words your own deepest wish and highest hope?

Man is spirit as God is spirit. This is the truth we need to learn for our own liberation and enlargement. A young Russian nobleman, Count Labanoff, for some trifling offence, was thrown by the czar into a stone dungeon but eight feet long and so low that he could never stand upright. Being forgotten at court, he remained in this living grave for thirty years. When he was let out, he had lost the power to erect himself; and, with the whole wide world before him, he would take a few short steps and stop, as if he had come to a solid wall. Are we not all imprisoned in narrow thoughts and petty interests, so that we lose the best use of the world and of our own faculties? We often complain, and with reason, of the cramping power of circumstances; yet the soul that has found God walks in a large liberty and soars in wide heaven, even when the body lies in a prison on a pallet of straw. Many a rich man inhabits a very narrow world. Many a poor man lives and moves in the open sphere of spiritual light and peace. If one has a hard heart and a tight fist, and another with nothing else to give is generously giving himself, like Jesus, to the great ends of wisdom and goodness, which shall we envy? Alas for the rich man who is content with his outward possessions! Alas for the poor man who refuses heavenly treasures because he resents his earthly poverty!

We need God, that we may rightly value man; and we need heavenly principles, that we may cultivate a noble worldly-mindedness. Many years ago I went to the Western frontier as a missionary. I hoped to be useful to the pioneer settlers of a new land by exhorting them to turn their thoughts and affections from this world to another. Gradually I discovered that I had been putting things wrong end foremost, and working against the grain. The people had come to the new land to build houses, to improve their worldly circumstances, to provide for their families, to create a new society, and to found useful institutions. It dawned upon me as a divine light that "the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof," that His will might be done here as it is in

heaven, and that, instead of exhorting men to leave this world and attend to religion, it would be more sensible to exhort them to attend religiously to this world and to all its proper affairs. And I believe the soul's cry for God is truly answered whenever we acquire property honestly, use it wisely, and reverently accept our daily duties as of divine appointment. But the true light grows dim and we sink into darkness whenever we snatch from each other, or use our means and advantages for injury to others or ourselves, or forget that all we have is a trust, and that nothing is absolutely our own.

To believe in God is to believe that there is a wise and good purpose within and behind our lives and our world. To love and serve God means simply that we shall try to make that purpose ours. To be saved and safe is therefore to come into harmony with the divine order, and to accept the shelter and guidance of the laws we live under, so far as we can understand them. Is not this the Christ-life? To be about the Father's business is the same as to be about our own business in the obedient spirit of sonship. Whatever the theologians may mean by the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, we shall all agree that he who lives and loves like a son has come into the Holy Family, and is in the right way to share all he can hold of the fulness of the Godhead. But the proof that he is living like a son will appear in the way he treats himself and the rest of the family. He cannot be a son, and live like a swine or a serpent or a wolf.

Dr. Boynton has told us his beautiful dream about Jesus. I, too, have dreamed. I saw two men quarrelling over a dollar. Each claimed it, and each was so angry that his face was like that of a wild animal. Jesus was passing that way; and each appealed to him, saying, "Master, command this man to give me my dollar." But he sadly answered: "Who made me a judge or a divider of goods? Take heed and beware of covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth." Then, with a look of searching tenderness and in a voice as sweet as it was stern, he said, "Sirs, ye are brothers: why do ye wrong one to another?" Then I saw a change come over the faces of the men. First

there was a flush of shame, so that they could neither look upon Jesus nor upon each other. Then the ugly animal disappeared, their true human faces came back, they clasped hands like comrades, they laughed like playfellows; and each insisted that the dollar belonged to the other. As they were both sure that they had no need of it, I think the question was settled by their giving it to a poor fellow who had lost his arm. Had not these two men found God? And had not Jesus become to them a kind of living way to the Fatherhood and to the brotherhood?

Let us not think of these precious truths of life as something belonging to ancient days. They meet our need to-day as we stand here in the summer shade and under the sacred skies. They meet the need of our struggling and distracted modern world. The power to cast out all the devils that torment us,—to cleanse away all our filthy leprosy, to heal the sickness of our sorrowing hearts, to raise us from the death of trespasses and sins to newness of life,—that power was never more truly present and available for these mighty miracles than now and here. For the God who made us is very gracious to the voice of our inward cry. If we seek Him with all the heart, He will surely be found. "And this is the covenant that I will make with them, saith the Lord: I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities I will remember no more."—*Rev. Charles G. Ames.*

THE STILL HOUR.

HE CARETH.

"The good God always builds the blind bird's nest!"

So runs the Turkish proverb, sweet and wise. How calmly may she fold her wings in rest,

Knowing his touch upon her shadowed eyes!
Thou, who hast known his love so strong and grand,

Rest, too, in his right hand.

"Behold," he crieth, "I will bring the blind

By ways they have not known,"—assurance sweet,—

"Straighten the crooked path, make life more kind,

Turn darkness into light before their feet."

Is thy sight darkened, friend? Thy God can see,

Let that suffice for thee.

Unsheltered birds his providence shall shield,

The helpless soul shall lean upon his strength,
Our need, grown great, to greater love shall yield,

And help, though long delayed, shall come at length.

Wait for him, doubting not he knoweth best

Who builds the blind bird's nest.

—*Florence Foster.*

Patience, kindness, generosity, humility, courtesy, unselfishness, good temper, guilelessness, sincerity,—these make up the supreme gift, the stature of the perfect man. You will observe that all are in relation to men, in relation to life, in relation to the known to-day and the near to-morrow, and not in the unknown eternity. We hear much of love to God: Christ spoke much of love to man. We make a great deal of peace with heaven: Christ made much of peace on earth.

Religion is not a strange or added thing, but the inspiration of the secular life, the breathing of an eternal spirit through this temporal world. The supreme thing, in short, is not a thing at all, but the giving of a further finish to the multitudinous words and acts which make up the sum of every common day.

There is no time to do more than make a passing note upon each of these ingredients. Love is *Patience*. This is the normal attitude of love,—love passive, love waiting to begin,—not in a hurry, calm, ready to do its work when the summons comes, but meantime wearing the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit. Love suffers long, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things. For love understands, and therefore waits.

Kindness. Love active. Have you ever noticed how much of Christ's life was spent in doing kind things,—in *merely* doing kind things? Run over it with that in view, and you will find that he spent a great proportion of His time simply in making people happy, in doing good turns to people. There is only one thing greater than happiness in the world, and that is holiness; and it is not in our keeping. But what God *has* put in our power is the happiness of

those about us, and that is largely to be secured by our being kind to them.—*Henry Drummond.*

JULY.

Some flowers are withered, and some joys have died;

The garden reeks with an East Indian scent
From beds where gillyflowers stand weak and spent;

The white heat pales the skies from side to side;
But in still lakes and rivers, cool, content,
Like starry blooms on a new firmament,
White lilies float and regally abide.

In vain the cruel skies their hot rays shed:

The lily does not feel their brazen glare,

In vain the pallid clouds refuse to share

Their dews: the lily feels no thirst, no dread.

Unharm'd, she lifts her queenly face and head;
She drinks of living waters, and keeps fair.

—*Helen Jackson (H. H.).*

RIGHTS DUE TO WILD FLOWERS.

"Hast thou . . .

Loved the wood-rose, and left it on its stalk?"

—*Emerson.*

I was once at a lovely, old-fashioned place in the country. The house had been built in old colony times, with deep fireplaces and broad, easy staircases, and at the windows wide window-seats, just the thing for children to climb upon and lean out over the broad window-sills; and, best of all, there were children who did all this, and enjoyed the house and country to their heart's content. Outside the house were plenty of trees, then fields, and to the north thick woods, full of paths and wood-roads in every direction. Everywhere wild flowers grew abundantly. There were banks of violets along the wood-roads and by the edges of the fields. The ground was bright for yards with patches of wild pinks. All sorts of things grew around, and in the pond below the slope by the house, and in the wet ground at the farther end of it. It was the same in the autumn. Where orchids had been in the meadow were now gentians, and the brook was marked in its course by a double scarlet line of cardinal flowers. There certainly never was such a place for flowers. What was the secret of it all?

"It is the children," said the mother,

when she heard the question: "the children take care of them. They love flowers, as all children do, I believe; and all I have taught them is to love them without destroying them. It goes to my heart to see flowers picked and thrown away fading, and I have never suffered the children to be so cruel. Flowers grow readily where they grow naturally, and with a little aid they grow, as you see, luxuriantly; and, as it is too shady near the house for a garden, the children care for the wild flowers where they grow."

"But what care do they have?" I asked. "They would have to work very hard to have such profusion of blossoms in any garden."

"Simply not picking every flower they find is one, and probably the principal, reason there are so many. They plant the ripe seeds as they find them, and in the autumn they do cover up certain favorite plants with earth and leaves for the winter. There is no hard work certainly, only an affectionate thought and care," said the mother. "Just think how quickly flowers would become rare if each child daily brought home a great bunch to wither and be thrown away. Flower stalks are tough, too, and, rather than break, come up, root and all, to a child's strong pull. Then there is an end to that plant. It almost seems as if some plants would die rather than lose their flowers."

"Do not think this fanciful," said the mother, after a pause. "After all, it is the children who gain by this self-control. It takes a good deal of resolution not to pick a flower; but, if they cannot keep their hands from a flower, how are they ever to learn forbearance? The battle must be fought sometime, and this is as good a battlefield as any."

I said to myself, I wish there were thousands of such mothers. Why are not children taught to stop and think instead of pulling every bright blossom they see? The whole aim and life of a plant is to produce its flower and seed. If it loses its flowers, it will have no seed; and then it can leave no descendants to inherit its beauty or fragrance and make the woods and hill-sides beautiful for future children, as it made them for us. Sometimes a plant waits for years before it blossoms. Then it puts forth all its strength in the effort, and dies after it has ripened its seed; for that is

the object of its whole life. Should a thoughtless child gather its flowers, simply to smell and throw away after a short time, its whole life-hope is lost.

Our legislatures are called upon to protect some of our rare wild flowers and ferns. The Hartford fern, the Cape Ann magnolia, the rarer orchids, are all threatened with extermination, and can only be saved by the arm of the law. It is the same with our native birds, with some of our beautiful native deer, with our trout in the mountain brooks. If our children learn forbearance when they are still young, they will never fail to respect the life of other created beings; for every animal, every plant, has a right to its own life. It is told of the French painter, Gros, that one of his students, entering the studio one day with a beautiful butterfly, pinned it, still living, on his hat. Gros flew into a rage. "What," he cried, "you find a beautiful being, and all you know is to torture and destroy it! Never enter my studio again. You are unworthy to be an artist." This was a man who extended to every created thing his sympathy, his respect for its life, his admiration for its beauty.—*S. Minns, in Little Unity.*

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[Send all matter for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 3 Webster Street, Allston, Mass.]

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3. In sending a book, enclose, when possible, a P.O. card for response, already addressed.

4. In thanking the person who has sent you a book, always mention the name of the book. Say, "I have received 'Black Beauty,'" or whatever the book may be; not, "I have received *that book*." This saves a busy person a good deal of time. Otherwise, she must consult her list constantly to find out what book has been received safely.

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Libraries.

Standing requests for libraries from:—

Mrs. O. A. Langston, Sidney, Comanche County, Texas;

Mrs. C. S. Stowell, Magnolia, Boulder County, Colorado;

Mr. Davis M'Carn, Anamosa, Iowa;

Mrs. D. Jayne, Jamestown, Chautauqua County, New York;

Mrs. Emma Miner, Lisbon, New Hampshire;

Stephen D. Rhoden, La Pine, Crenshaw County, Alabama;

Mrs. Isadore E. Rice, Oakland, Oregon.

Mrs. Margaret Ogilvie, "The Bonnie Briars," Grand Junction, Colorado. Mrs. Ogilvie is struggling to place in each school in her county, where the school committee will furnish a bookcase, a collection of good books. She has already supplied several schools, but there are three or four more in which she is particularly interested.

Those who send offers and requests for the Book Club will do us a kindness by noting the following suggestions: 1. Please write very clearly. 2. Do not use a pencil. 3. Do not use contractions, especially names of States (as Cal. and Col. for California, Colorado). 4. Write on one side only of the paper. 5. Do not forget to give your

full address. (The State is now and then omitted.)

Dear Cheerful Letter,—I am forced to stop school for a while, but am anxious to study in all my spare time. I would like very much to have a higher Rhetoric and a book on Political Economy.

I would also be very glad to get a copy of "Stepping Heavenward." I am eighteen years old. Joseph M. Rowland, Florian, Anson County, North Carolina.

Mrs. E. Smith, Ryan, Indian Territory, a widow with five children, the eldest twelve years of age, will be very thankful to receive any suitable reading for the children.

Mrs. Sarah Bowen, Ben Franklin, Delta County, Texas, wishes to thank all who have so kindly sent her reading. She is unable to write each one, and takes this way to express her gratitude.

Mrs. Mary Walker, Linwood, Indian Territory, asks for reading for herself. She lives in a lonely neighborhood.

James L. Pearson, Elksville, Wilkes County, North Carolina, a young man of eighteen, with education very limited, and a lover of good literature, will be glad to receive any books or magazines that may be sent him.

Mrs. Mildred Alley, Heareford, Stokes County, North Carolina, has started a free class of twenty-five of the poor children in her neighborhood, ages from five to twelve years. She asks for any school books and cards suitable for such a class.

Miss Violet I. Cairns, Browning, Marquette County, Wisconsin, would be pleased to receive the *Review of Reviews* for 1898, and any other magazines and clippings about the present war, also General History of the World and the poem "Sheridan's Ride" and other like poetry.

I beg to inform you that, if you have any surplus of literature at hand, it would be very acceptable, and would be sent with other things out to Alaska to parties engaged there in the common pursuit, who would appreciate your generosity not a little. (Some current literature would not be inappropriate.)

Allow me also to take this opportunity to reiterate my sincere appreciation of the

little ray of "sunshine" so faithfully sent to me. A. L. Braband, Sheboygan, Wisconsin.

I have been receiving magazines, religious weekly journals, since last December from many generous donors. I want to say through *The Cheerful Letter* that I again tender my thanks for this literature, which I have distributed. Would also write that I expect to be called away from here some time in June, and would therefore ask all who have been regularly sending *Christian Register*, *Outlook*, and other literature to discontinue sending the same, as I will not then be there to distribute them. The literature has done great good, and been highly appreciated by those who have received it. Believe me, Yours respectfully, S. G. Davis, Limona, Florida.

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

[Articles for this department should be sent to Mrs. J. S. Howe, Chestnut Street, Brookline, Mass.]

"DO" AND "DON'T."

Two very small and insignificant words, perhaps you will say; but let us think a moment. *Are* they so insignificant? What do they mean? And is there any preference as to their use?

Insignificant they cannot be; for they are probably more used with children—or at least one of them is—than most other words, and used in a way meant to be very effective.

Listen some time to the average conversation of mother or nurse with the children about her, and see if you do not frequently hear expressions such as these: "Don't do this"; "No, don't go there"; "Now don't you touch that"; "Oh, don't play that way"; and many, many more of a like nature. One would almost think that the little word "*do*" was very difficult to pronounce, while "*don't*," "*stop*," "*mustn't*," and many other words of a like nature possessed some peculiar charm.

The truth is that "*do*" is the little charmed word which unlocks all the sweetness and beauty of a child's disposition, while the excessive use of "*don't*" seems to shut it all up, and bring out only the unpleasant, irritable qualities. We mothers and parents only need to wake up and realize the truth about it a little more

clearly, and just as soon as we do that we shall be more careful about the way we talk to our children.

Just think a minute. We say, "Yes, you can do that," "Come, do this now," and other expressions of the same sort; and a child has employment given him, a definite something which he can do, and which in nine cases out of ten he will do, and enjoy doing. In this way he goes through a constant, loving, helpful, upbuilding, character-forming process, while the child who hears the almost constant "Don't do this," "No, don't go there," and the like, is left listless and idle, with no definite thought to follow, only an intense desire to be doing something. So, following the law of his being, he does something, only to hear "don't" again; and so on it goes, till the child is dubbed "cross," "mischievous," "a hard child to manage," etc.

More than this, the constant negatives which are hurled at children soon rob them of their spontaneity and naturalness; and they go about, perhaps in a frightened, hopeless sort of way, hardly daring to breathe, or else in a bold, daring, "don't-care" manner, which is pitiful to see.

Only yesterday a lady said to me, in speaking of a mother's actions toward her little twelve-year-old daughter: "When she—the mother—gets tired or nervous, it all seems to vent itself on the child with 'Oh, don't sit that way!' 'Don't hold your fork so!' and many more like expressions; and it seems to be spoiling the child."

Yes, that is too often the trouble. We mothers are tired or a little out of sorts, and we do not want to be disturbed to find the right employment, so the hungry child, longing for a little co-operation and sympathy, is sent off with a "don't." Surely there is no upbuilding process in that kind of talk,—only a constant tearing down. Is that our work with the children? Can we ever accomplish anything in any line of work by simply tearing down? Surely not!

Not that I would never use the negatives: their judicious, loving use is all right; but I feel sure that obedience can be taught just as well—yes, a thousand times better—without using them very extensively. Their extensive use is like going back to the Old Testament teaching of "Thou shalt not," and abiding by that, forgetting the higher,

more positive teaching of Jesus as given in the Sermon on the Mount.—*From Childhood.*

(To be continued.)

NATURAL HISTORY.

ANTS.

The nests of ants may be divided into several classes. Some species—our common *horse ant*, for instance—collect large quantities of materials, such as bits of stick, fir leaves, etc., which they heap up into conical masses. Some construct their nests of earth, the cells being partly above, partly below, the natural level. Some are entirely underground: others eat into the trunks of old trees.

In some cases the nests are very extensive. Bates mentions that while he was at Pará an attempt was made to destroy a nest of the *sauba ants* by blowing into it the fumes of sulphur; and he saw the smoke issue from a great number of holes, some of them not less than seventy yards apart.

A community of ants must not be confused with an ant-hill in the ordinary sense. Very often indeed, a community has only one dwelling, and in most species seldom more than three or four. Some, however, form numerous colonies. M. Forel even found a case in which one community had no less than two hundred colonies, and occupied a circular space with a radius of nearly two hundred yards. Within this area they had destroyed almost all the other ants. In these cases the number of ants thus associated together must have been enormous. Even in single nests Forel estimates the numbers at from 5,000 to 500,000.

Ants also make for themselves roads. These are not merely worn by the continued passage of the ants, as has been supposed, but are actually prepared by the ants, rather, however, by the removal of obstacles than by any actual construction. In some cases these roadways are arched over with earth, so as to form covered ways. In others the ants excavate regular subterranean tunnels, sometimes of considerable length.

The food of ants consists of insects, great numbers of which they destroy; of honey,

honey-dew, and fruit. Indeed, scarcely any animal or sweet substance comes amiss to them. Some species—such, for instance, as the small brown *Garden Ant*—ascend bushes in search of *aphides*. The ant then taps the *aphis* gently with her antennæ; and the *aphis* emits a drop of sweet fluid, which the ant drinks. Sometimes the ants even build covered ways up to and over the *aphides*, which, moreover, they protect from the attacks of other insects. Our English ants do not store up provision for the winter. Indeed, their food is not of a nature which would admit of this.

Ants have many enemies. They themselves, and still more their young, are a favorite food of many animals. They are attacked also by numerous parasites. If a nest of the brown ant is disturbed at any time during the summer, some small flies may probably be seen hovering over the nest, and every now and then making a dash at some particular ant. These flies lay their eggs on the ants, inside which the larvæ live. Other species of the genus are in the same way parasitic on bees.

In industry ants are not surpassed even by bees and wasps. They work all day, and in warm weather, if need be, even at night, too. I once watched an ant from six in the morning till a quarter to ten at night, and she worked without intermission the whole time. I had put her to a saucer containing larvæ, and in this time she carried off no less than 187 to the nest. I kept another ant, which I employed in my experiments, under observation several days. When I had to leave the house, and again when I went to bed at night, I kept her shut up in a small bottle; but the moment I let her out she began to work again.

Gould noticed certain "amusements" or "sportive exercises" which he had observed among ants. Huber also mentions scenes which he had witnessed on the surface of ant-hills, and which, he says, "I dare not qualify with the title gymnastic, although they bear a close resemblance to scenes of that kind." The ants raised themselves on their hind legs, caressed one another with their antennæ, engaged in mock combats, and almost seemed to be playing at "hide and seek."

There are of course many cases in which the action of ants is very beneficial to plants.

They kill off a great number of small caterpillars and other insects. Forel found in one large nest that more than twenty-eight dead insects were brought in per minute, which would give during the period of greatest energy more than 100,000 insects destroyed in a day by the inhabitants of one nest alone.

It is hardly necessary to say that, as a general rule, each species of ant lives by itself. There are, however, some interesting exceptions. One little kind of ant is found exclusively in the nests of the much larger *Horse Ants*. We do not know what the relations between the two species are. The small ones, however, follow the Horse Ants when they change their nests, running about among them and between their legs, tapping them inquisitively with their antennæ, and even sometimes climbing on to their backs, as if for a ride, while the large ants seem to take little notice of them. They almost seem to be the dogs, or perhaps the cats, of the ants. Another small species, which makes its chambers and galleries in the walls of the nests of larger species, is the bitter enemy of its hosts. The latter cannot get at them, because they are too large to enter the galleries. The little ones, therefore, are quite safe, and, as it appears, make excursions into the nurseries of the larger ant, and carry off the larvæ as food.—*From Chapters in "Popular Natural History," by Sir John Lubbock, Bart.*

AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

[Please send all material for this department to Miss E. D. Chapman, 34 Buckingham Street, Cambridge, Mass.]

CHARADES.

No. 1.

Nay, not to stimulate the weary brain,
Nor yet to quench the toper's raging
thirst,
We cull the green leaf of the Chinese main,
But fill the cup and take it to *my first*.

"Let good digestion wait on appetite,"
On Christmas Day, Thanksgiving Day, or
Fast.
At dewy morn, high noon, or sombre night,
Feast, feast, my soul, until you are *my last*.

Oh, fairest, fondest sight to glutton's eye,
 The heaping platter and the flowing bowl,
 He stuffs and gorges, feasts, and wonders
 why,
 Filled with good cheer, he cannot be *my*
whole.

Without a place to lay a weary head,
 Unfed, unhoused, a wanderer accurst,
 In turn by hope or desperation led,
 In vain I seek a flat to be *my first*.

To wisely plan the course of future days,
 Learn well the lessons of the fleeting past:
 Who well to heart their kind instruction lays
 Is sure as shooting, never to *my last*.

At night by stealth I put it in a box,
 Then, like a guilty thing, away I stole.
 At morn another at your portal knocks,
 And begs a kindly welcome for *my whole*.

Of firsts and lasts and wholes a fearful mess,
 Devoid of sense to those who know no
 better;
 But faithful hearts that love thee well will
 guess
 'Tis thy dear self, beloved —

No. 2.

My first is found in every house,
My second is a kind of grain,
My third and *fourth* one cannot do without,
 And *my whole* is one of the United States.

NUTS TO CRACK.

1.

Do you know you can buy thirteen two-cent stamps for a cent and a quarter?

2.

A fish is fifteen inches long: the head is as long as the tail. If the head were twice as long, the head and tail would be as long as the body. How long is each part?

DROP-LETTER PUZZLE.

Supply the same vowel as many times as is necessary in the following jingle. And then read the rhyme.

G t t w n t s h w y u r g w n
 G t T r y t s t p y u r b y
 F r m g i n g n t f l p r J h n.

CONUNDRUM.

Why is Y a patriotic letter?

Answers to puzzles in June number.

CHARADE.

Indigo.

NUTS TO CRACK.

1. Brother and sister. 2. Three. 3. 5, 1, and 94. 4. One holds a peck, and the other pecks a hole.

SEA-CRAFT.

1. Brig. 2. Bark. 3. Canoe (K new). 4. Catamaran. 5. Schooner. 6. Steamer. 7. Collier. 8. Ram. 9. Torpedo. 10. Shell. 11. Cutter. 12. Monitor. 13. Tug. 14. Tender. 15. Cruiser (crew-Sir).

During Miss Clarke's absence in Europe, Miss Bertha Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass., will act as editor.

The summer address of our treasurer will be Miss Louise Howe, Box 21, Nahant, Mass. But subscriptions may be left for her at 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass., at any season.

DIRECTIONS.

EDITOR,—Miss L. Freeman Clarke.

SECRETARY OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Miss Bertha Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.

SECRETARY OF BOOK CLUB OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 3 Webster Street, Allston, Mass.

TREASURER OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Miss Louise Howe, Box 21, Nahant, Mass., or 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

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